

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](http://www.sciencedirect.com)

Journal of Ethnic Foods

journal homepage: <http://journalofethnicfoods.net>

Editorial

Association of Southeast Asian Nations workshop on ethnic foods



To promote ethnic foods from around the world, as pursued by the *Journal Ethnic Foods* (JEF), the “ASEAN Workshop for Traditional Fermentation Food & Culture” was held on September 9, 2015, at the Plaza Hotel in Seoul, Korea under the sponsorship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Center Korea. Representatives from 10 ASEAN member countries, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and Korea, participated in the workshop. Professor Kwon, the Editor-in-Chief of JEF, first delivered a lecture on the topic of “World ethnic foods and Korean fermented foods,” highlighting the importance of ethnic foods. Afterward, the representatives in attendance shared information on the ethnic foods of their respective countries. In addition, the participating representatives had an opportunity to look around Korea’s fermentation facilities and grounds. They visited the Institute of Sunchang Fermented Soybean Products, a *kimchi* production factory of Korea that studies the local *cheongkukjang*, *gochujang*, and *doenjang*, and the Sempio Foods factory that produces global products (Figs. 1 and 2).

With a notable increase of interest recently in fermented food as “well-being food” and its related industry in the global food product market, it was evident that Asian countries are abundant in a range of high-quality fermented foods—the products of cultural traditions and heritage, resources, as well as environmental factors. For example, fermented foods such as *tempeh*, which is made from soybeans, are currently in the global limelight; these foods are being recast as functional foods for their health benefits and scientific

research is in nascent stages to prove these benefits. However, it is regrettable that these foods are not as well known as they should be worldwide due to the scarcity of scientific studies in this field. While it is true that not many Asian fermented foods are enjoyed on a global scale, they will certainly become celebrated global



Fig. 2. Participants experiencing the *gochujang* (Korean red pepper paste)-making process in Sunchang, Jeonbuk province, South Korea.



Fig. 1. Group photograph of participants.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jef.2015.11.008>

2352-6181/Copyright © 2015, Korea Food Research Institute, Published by Elsevier. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

health foods in the future when there is more systematic scientific research in this field.

Such fermented foods of ASEAN countries are valuable cultural assets as well as carrying significance as whole industries, so it is my hope that more scientific research on this topic will be conducted soon. If so, I believe that there will be a chance to publish an ASEAN special issue in JEF. JEF has a meaningful role to play in this regard. In this issue, not all ASEAN ethnic foods have been introduced, but there are papers on some of their ethnic foods.

We expect that through JEF, there will be spurred scientific research and understanding of Asia's foods that had been left as gems hidden in veil, and that a venue for realizing well-being and wellness in the modern society through Asian ethnic foods will be created.

Moving forward, we plan to host workshops and symposiums on ethnic foods from not only ASEAN countries, but also China, India,

Africa, and Europe. If opportunities present themselves, we also hope to publish a series of special issues focused on these regions.

Dae Young Kwon*

Korea Food Research Institute, Seongnam, South Korea

* Corresponding author. Korea Food Research Institute, 1201-62, Anyangpangyo-ro, Bundang, Seongnam, Gyeonggi-do, 13539, South Korea.

E-mail address: dykwon@kfri.re.kr.

Received 27 September 2015

Received in revised form 28 September 2015

Accepted 30 September 2015

Available online 1 December 2015